

Lyme Disease Fact Sheet



For more information about Lyme disease, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme>

Children and Lyme disease

Although anyone can get Lyme disease, children spend a lot of time outdoors and are at particular risk.

Reasons to suspect that your child may have Lyme disease include:

- Your family lives in or has visited a region where Lyme disease is commonly found
- Your child is experiencing symptoms such as rash, fever, chills, fatigue, joint or muscle pain, or facial paralysis

Children sometimes experience joint pain as their first, and possibly only, symptom of Lyme disease. If you suspect that your child may have Lyme disease, seek care promptly.

What to expect from your child's appointment

If the doctor thinks that your child has Lyme disease based on symptoms and possible exposure, your child will most likely receive 2-4 weeks of antibiotics.

If your child's symptoms are not clear-cut, the doctor may decide to have your child's blood tested. Keep in mind that blood testing is more accurate the longer the child has been infected. A blood test for Lyme disease may not appear positive until 4-6 weeks after infection. Therefore, a doctor may order a later, second test if the first test was negative.

Treatment of Lyme disease in children

- A typical treatment for children less than 8-years-old would include oral amoxicillin twice daily for 2-4 weeks. Children who are allergic to amoxicillin would most likely receive cefuroxime axetil twice daily instead.
- A typical treatment for children over 8-years-old would include doxycycline twice daily for 2-4 weeks. Children who are allergic to tetracyclines would receive amoxicillin or cefuroxime axetil twice daily instead.



Facial paralysis.



Bull's eye rash on the back.



Arthritic knee.



When to see your doctor

See a doctor if you develop a fever, a rash, severe fatigue, facial paralysis, or joint pain within 30 days of being bitten by a tick. Be sure to tell your doctor about your tick bite. If you have these symptoms and work where Lyme disease is common, it is important to get treatment right away.

If you do not get treatment, you may later experience severe arthritis and problems with your nerves, spinal cord, brain, or heart.

Antibiotics are used to treat Lyme disease

Your doctor will prescribe specific antibiotics, typically for 2-3 weeks. Most patients recover during this time. You may feel tired while you are recovering, even though the infection is cured.

If you wait longer to seek treatment or take the wrong medicine, you may have symptoms that are more difficult to treat.

Looking ahead to recovery

Take your antibiotics as recommended. Allow yourself plenty of rest. It may take time to feel better, just as it takes time to recover from other illnesses.

Some people wonder if there is a test to confirm that they are cured. This is not possible. Your body remembers an infection long after it has been cured. Additional blood tests might be positive for months or years. Don't let this alarm you. It doesn't mean you are still infected.

Finally, practice prevention against tick bites. You can get Lyme disease again if you are bitten by another infected tick.

Additional information

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme>
2. The Clinical Assessment, Treatment, and Prevention of Lyme Disease, Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis, and Babesiosis: Clinical Practice Guidelines by the Infectious Diseases Society of America <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/508667>
3. Tick Management Handbook (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven) <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/resources/handbook.pdf>

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